



Cape Cod

Is a Number of Things





CAPE COD

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ALLAN NEAL

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CAPE COD
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We had been driving along in the full glory of a September afternoon on the Cape. It was a wonderful world of deep blues and green pines, of gleaming white sands and of sunshine singing over everything. I had been pointing out things, afraid she might miss them, or not see all there was to see in them.

She said, "I wish you could hear yourself as you sound to others. When you talk about the Cape it is as if you owned it, all of it,—and you treat everyone else here as your guest." There was nothing to say to that because I knew it was the truth. Still, I knew that there was a better than even chance that, given a year, more or less, she would be irritating some newcomer from the Mainland with her own possessiveness. She said, "It is really a very nice place you know, especially on a day like this. But you have been everywhere and everywhere leads you right back here. You never leave the Cape except under protest, and you rush back as if it might disappear in your absence. What is it between you and the Cape?"

So I thought I would try, anyway, and I began:

"Cape Cod is a number of things, and it means a number of things to me."

First of all there is the land, the bounteous and the beautiful land, and then there is the beautiful and bounteous sea that surrounds it. And there is the special way in which the land and the sea respond to nature and her varied seasons. There are a thousand colors and a thousand variations of each; there are a thousand moods and you never know which one to expect. You only know that the land and sea are there and that there is no dullness in them.

AT THE RISING OF THE SUN

It was the strange half-light between yesterday and to-day. From an intricate network of twisting, turning roads you could follow the headlights of the cars as they moved from all points of the compass toward the dark outline of the hill. The moist air formed diadems of light around the headlamps and their beams sparkled from the gleaming, rain-washed street. Sometimes the cars swerved to avoid a branch or bush that had been tossed in their path by the gale winds of the night. Sometimes the lights picked out some strange creature of the night as it scurried into the brush beside the road, alarmed at this unlooked-for intrusion upon its domain.

At length each car was in place upon the hill. There was still no activity upon the Main Highway below which snaked its way down past Quivet and Sesuit to the Outer Cape. The wavering lines of street lights that from a distance twinkled through the branches seemed to grow weaker as the night shadows were replaced by a silvery grayness. The rain ended but the storm was not over. There was wind, howling across the Bay from Manomet, tossing the flexible pines into confusion, rattling the branches of maple and scrub oak that were thick with new buds, making conversation nearly impossible among people who were otherwise occupied anyway in clutching their billowing coats about them. There was the Bay, lashed now into a white fury with huge combers breaking out of a gray-green sea all along shore. You could hear the sound of them as they hit the beach. In contrast to the Bay the lake below looked peaceful, cold but peaceful, and a circling gull above it rode with the wind. He did not move his wings nor did he make any sound. It was cold all right and you could tell it by the look of the trumpeter as the first notes of the grand old hymn broke across the hills.

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Although no sun showed at the horizon, the sky above it showed rosey hues and the swift-moving scud overhead revealed patches of blue that had not been there before. The wind tore rudely at the pages of the hymnals but from the group clustered in the lee of the stone tower the notes came loud and true.

Soon you could tell for sure that the sun was up from the sea at Chatham and that it was to be, after all, a wonderful day. Off across the woodlands toward the Sound the trees began to cease their agitation and the sun's rays pierced the clouds to play about them. Along one side of the Bay the long, low fore-arm of the Cape became visible as though it had just then emerged from the sea; opposite, the cliffs of Manomet were majestic and purple in the morning light.

As the light increased the air became clearer and there was a new softness in it. There was a softness and a wonderful fresh taste and you knew it was spring. The pale sleepiness had gone from the faces of the people as it had from all the earth and in its place there was new color that could have been born of the wind or of this special day. Finally, the cars, that had groped their way up the hill through the night-shadows, turned down the hill and along the twisting roads where the first sunshine was already drying the roadside pools. The roads were clean and the season was new and you could see the symbols of the age-old hope and promise all about you.

So, at last, all the cars were gone and Scargo Hill was left alone to drowse away the first early hours of a bright new day. Below on the highway the street lights had gone out and, one by one, so had the night lights in the old white houses along the way. From some houses the first, gray curls of smoke from a morning fire drifted upwards. And Easter Sunday, at the rising of the sun, had come to the Cape.

NOR'EASTER

Sometime in a Cape November there will come the first real Nor'easter, punching an effective period to the end of Fall. Then the winds come roaring out of the northeast to whip the waters of the Cape into a white frenzy and howl around the corners of old houses. These are the winds that rattle the store signs along Main Street while torrential rains beat against the plate glass windows and the shoppers are not there. It is a time to spend indoors, huddled up to the warmth of stove or open hearth, while the sturdy Cape houses settle down into the wind to weather it out. Above stairs the old houses yield gently to the wind in a motion that is reminiscent of the roll of a ship at sea. Like the ship, they will ride out this storm as they have many another through-out a long two centuries.

When a Nor'easter has passed, or settled down to a dull roar, it is a time for the Outer Beach, that magnificent stretch of shoreline that skirts the Cape from Provincetown to Chatham. One early Saturday in November I reached the Nauset Coast Guard Beach just as the peak of the high tide reached the shore and the unleashed fury of an angry Atlantic beat against the land to create one of the Cape's most terrifying and awesome sights. The wind had shifted to the southwest and the sun was trying to break through the overcast but the seas piled higher and higher, as if through their own momentum. The whole surface of the sea was a menacing mass of tortured white breakers which threw their spume in smokey clouds a hundred feet into the air. The breakers themselves reached heights of over fifty feet and followed one upon another with such savage intensity that there was hardly any distinguishing between them. They tossed a mass of miscellaneous lumber about with incredible ease. At the

near shore a huge, battered scow rolled over and over and was finally spewed out upon the beach, while out in the troughs of the waves several telephone poles and a tremendous, up-rooted tree were tossed about as lightly as if they had been matchsticks. The shore was rapidly becoming littered with the toll of the storm, an extraordinary collection of objects of every size, color and shape, each with a story of its own, each with a beginning of its own, united by their common destination — the outer beach of the Cape. Each of them was smothered in a cottony mass of foam that writhed in the wind and was iridescent in the wavering sunlight and piled upon the beach like banks of snow before a plow.

The air was full of salt, new-washed, crisp and exhilarating, and the call of the beach itself was irresistible. Making cautious and slow headway, I headed south along it with the sea nipping at my heels and the salt spray in my face. This was the beach that Thoreau had known so well and that Henry Beston so lovingly described in his "The Outermost House"; but even Beston, who knew the beach in all seasons and in all weathers, might not have recognized it that day. It was hardly there at all, for nearly all of its white wideness was covered with the gaping jaws of the waves that threatened it. Westward of the beach the salt marshes were completely awash and all the way to Route 28 you looked across a whole sea that was leaden and riled and made the whole landscape unfamiliar and strange. All along the beach the breakers tore and crashed against the high sand dunes. Walking became a tricky, perilous business with the sea acting as if it were possessed of some malicious wit of its own with which it could set a trap for the unalert. So great were the breakers that, when they would recede, a hundred feet of beach would stand bare and revealed only to be covered up in the very next instant while the water reached for your feet and sent you scrambling up the sand dunes to safety. The air was filled with the continuous roar and swish of the

sea but after walking a bit you could anticipate its next attack by the crash of the comber and the intensity of the swish as it swept over the sand.

The wind had played tricks with the dunes, changing not only their shapes but their entire position. In one place a ship's spar, remnant of an ancient shipwreck, had resisted the wind which then carved a huge vertical funnel around it. Erosion and the wind had left huge pillars of sand teetering under their own weight. The whole beaten strip of beach had the look of a miniature, tortured Grand Canyon. Even the usually indestructible beach grass had suffered. Its roots were exposed, its head bowed, and in the tracings on the sand one could detect the wild gyrations it had been forced to perform at the will of the wind. In seven distinct places the sea had crashed all the way through the barrier beach, surging over the marsh toward the main highway. Three of them were knee-deep and as you waded through them the water swirled about your legs with tremendous force. Walking became a real effort. At last the Outermost House was in sight and it was miraculously unaffected by the storm. Henry Beston would have been proud of the look of it as it nestled in the dunes unconcerned by the changing and chaotic world around it.

Fording one more breakthrough I found myself at Nauset Inlet where the sea crashed toward the Mainland without hindrance and the rip tides had a special fury of their own. For nearly an hour I perched upon a steep-sided dune and watched the waves reaching for the land. Behind me a ton of sand slid into the sea with a long sigh that emphasized the instability of my position. Suddenly, however, the sun, in its full brilliance, broke through the overcast with finality. Then the wind seemed milder, and, as the tide receded, the waves became less threatening. The whitecaps, now shining in the sunlight, took on such beauty as to quite belie their destructive powers. Out over the breakers a flock of seagulls appeared, flying parallel to the shore and screaming defiance

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as they flew in and out of the troughs of the waves. They seemed to have confidence that the storm was over. A few feet down the beach a red fox emerged from the protection of a clump of beach grass and walked cautiously toward the water's edge. He sniffed inquiringly at the sea air and then, with more assurance, trotted off in search of breakfast. Gradually the great wide beach emerged from the ebbing tide. It was flat and wet and covered with the debris of the storm but the oceanside world was returning to normal. The storm had left some marks that might never be erased. And it left with me a memory of a day at the Outer Beach that I could never forget.

A DRIVE DOWN CAPE

“Yes, I’ve been to Cape Cod. Drove all the way to Provincetown and back. There’s absolutely nothing to it, you know. Nothing but sand and scrub pine. How anyone could live there, or how anyone could choose to go there even for a visit is more than I can figure out!”

Every Cape Codder has probably been subjected to some such remark as the above from some “authority” who has taken all of a half day to rush down one side of the Cape and up the other, expecting who knows what miracles and side-shows, but seeing nothing anyway. It is a time to grit the teeth and be glad, at least, that they won’t be back. And yet you wish for a minute that you could show them, show them where the little lane they just passed so quickly led to a view that would be breath-taking in beauty and good for their souls, show them any of a thousand things that are waiting for those who would see. For where under the sun, if not on Cape Cod, could anyone find such infinite variety of landscape and seascape crowded into so small an area? Some of the new highways will be uninteresting, it is true, but so they are anywhere else for they are built for the age of speed when it is essential to go somewhere in a hurry and there is no time for looking around. But the new highways were designed by gentlemen with slide rules far away and they have nothing to do with the old roads that are still there to give pleasure.

There is, for example, a way of getting all the way down Cape to Truro and beyond and you need hardly touch any of the Main Roads in doing it. There is variety enough for anyone. You pass resort-type settlements, quiet ponds and hidden lakes, farmlands, beaches, vast panorama of two separate seas, flat plains and rolling dunes, salt meadow and

fresh water brooks, dense pine woods and wind-swept clearings where the pine and the oak were gnarled and gaunt, but unbeaten. You can stop for a bit because there is no hurry and you can walk on a special stretch of beach along the Bay where there are no cottages and no people and the birds are many and varied. There the Bay smiles broadly all the way westward to where the protective arm of Wellfleet Harbor curves into the sea and northward to where the golden prow of Lieutenant's Island cuts the water. Here is a beach to be combed, filled with all manner of treasure, a thousand romances of the sea at your feet. Here is air that is clean and fresh as it was in the beginning, swirling over a blue-green Bay, a white strand, and a salt marsh that is honey-colored in the sun and shot through with veins of brilliant blue by the high tide.

Leaving the beach to continue down Cape, you come suddenly upon the strangest scenery of all, where the moors of Wellfleet and Truro swell out of the Bay in fantastic shapes, and merely condescend to allow the old County Road to pass through them—which it does not do easily. The hills have been softly rounded by time and the wind, and they rise sometimes to great heights, only to fall off into sheltered valleys where the scrub pines grow. It is a crazy-quilt of topography and color, nearly smothered by a blanket of wild cranberry that is glossey-green in summer and scarlet in winter. The road is a roller-coaster, crossing and recrossing the railway, climbing tediously upwards and rushing suddenly downwards, winding snakelike, and almost repeating itself through the moors. And rounding each blind curve you come upon another sweeping view of the Bay, and of the flat hook of Provincetown in the distance. And always around you are the sand hills, like great ocean swells.

On some hills there are houses, so precariously perched that one expects to see them disappear like a ship into the trough of the waves. Sometimes the rains tear at the slopes and leave jagged scars; sometimes the blanket of wild cran-

berry is lifted to show the sand beneath, rose-colored in the sun. The telegraph poles along the highway stretch doggedly but insignificantly across the moors, black silhouettes that have adapted themselves to the surroundings until they look as if they might always have been there.

The moors have the look of old lands that might have been in at the writing of history. The encroachments of civilization upon them look temporary and out of place, and the sand hills have that about them which is eternal. These moors looked out upon the Mayflower in 1620 and felt the pioneer feet of Miles Standish and the other Pilgrims who set out from Provincetown to explore the Truro shore. At Corn Hill they discovered the Indian corn cache that was to mean so much to them in their struggle for survival. In these lands they found the strange grave of a white man indicating that not even Europeans were a novelty to these old hills. To the south, at Eastham, they had their first encounter with the Indians. It was this Bay shore that provided them with spring water, food, and the feel of land beneath feet that were weary from the motions of the ship. Looking for the familiar they found these dunes to be reminiscent of Holland, and they carefully gathered and took back to the ship any vegetation which looked like that of home. Then, with new courage, they turned their backs on home. They turned their backs on these moors that had given them succor. And then they sailed westward, into immortality.

FARMING THE SALT SEA

With the Captain

“Stay on Cape Cod, boy,” an old timer once counselled me. “There’s no snow to fight in winter and plenty of food in the sea for those who will go after it.” The Captain was one of those who went after it with the aid of one of those wonderful Cape Cod Catboats, in the beginning to sell his catch commercially, and later for the entertainment of the summer visitor on charter excursions into the Sound. Such a trip was something to look forward to with great excitement and it was no wonder that one gray morning he caught me with my foolish questions down. I arrived at the old fish shanty on the bank of the little tidal river out of breath and fearful that the lowering skies and soft gray puffs of fog from the Sound might cancel our long-awaited trip. I found the Captain seated on an upturned keg cracking shellfish bait and examining stout coils of sturdy hand-line. Like so many of my friends on the Cape he was never one to waste words and when I entered the fragrant dimness of the shanty he said his “good day” with a quick look in my direction and a slight nod of the head. (Nothing more was needed because if he hadn’t been pleased to see you you would not in the first place have had access to the temple where all the precious tools of his trade were spread about him, where a green-horn could get all snarled up and ruin everything, and where more than sometimes the Captain would retire to think and claim sanctuary from the women-folk and the complications of life away from the shore.)

“Is it going to clear up,” I asked him breathlessly and fearful of the answer.

“It always has,” he answered soberly, and I have never been able to bring myself to ask that question of anyone since.

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The Captain was right of course and it cleared much sooner than anyone could have hoped, with the first sun in many days shining eerily through the gray skies to chase the fog back out towards Nantucket. In what seemed moments, a mean kind of day had become a day of rare beauty and we were out in the Cat with a fair southwest breeze and the golden sunlight glinting off blue-green water. There was the wonderful smell of salt and of hemp and of the sun-bleached wood of the fish barrels that now carried only our hopes. There was the less appealing smell of the fresh bait in which the circling and scolding gulls had placed their hopes.

The Captain stood at the helm, his heavily tanned and wind-burned face almost black against the morning sky. One cheek was now heavily distorted and a thin line of tobacco juice seeped slowly out of the corner of his mouth. Sometimes he would wipe at it casually with the back of his hand in a most natural gesture and sometimes he would let go into the Sound but never would the tiniest speck reach the immaculate decks of his ship. His eyes were like an Indian's, keen and penetrating, always alert and picking out things at sea, and back on the receding, pine-fringed shore, that I never learned to see although I knew they were there. He only spoke when there was really something to say and we knew that one thing he would ultimately say was that I could take a turn at the tiller. In spite of the importance of that to me it was entirely against the code to request the privilege before it was extended and I respected the code. When the great moment came the Captain would direct my course by the pointed-finger method and his own estimate of land and sea marks proved to be as unerring as any compass. Soon he would have guided us skillfully and mystically to the fishing ledge that was his secret. (He had given me explicit directions for three successive summers that had proved to be as different and contradictory as they were explicit before I became discreet enough not to ask

again for the location of his particular salt water farm.) There we would sit with the sun warm and all over us and sending up little waves of heat from the bright sands of Monomoy, and with the lazy tolling of a distant bell-buoy in our ears.

The rhythmic toll of the bell combined with the slow roll of the boat was almost hypnotic and, in any other circumstances than good fishing, would have induced sleep to the worst insomniac. But the fishing *was* good and it was a rare thrill to see the barrels fast filling with flounders, scup and tautog. It seemed that it might go on forever, a wonderful forever, the constant baiting and hauling, and the lively flopping noises from the barrels. But the sun moved relentlessly westward and after just one more catch it was time to stow our gear and weigh anchor. Then we would head for the distant shore-line of the Sound which was now but a hazy, purple line in the distance. Off towards Great Island the sun was an orange ball, full of promise of a bright tomorrow, but the air was suddenly chill and it was time to fetch the warm jacket that had been carefully stowed in the little cabin. The Captain now relinquished his "chaw" for a well-worn pipe and you could feel his mood of contentment at the end of a day well spent in a way he liked to spend it. My own reluctance to leaving the ledge was tempered by thoughts of the dinner waiting ashore and the pure joy of describing our fishing luck to the poor, land-bound neighbors to whom I would proudly deliver my share of the catch. Looking back on those summer evenings I can believe that those neighbors frequently had a superfluity of fish. But they were kind and gracious and laudatory and I never suspected for a moment that they did not share my excitement and enthusiasm.

The Sound is as unpredictable as any sea and there were days when the Cat rolled and strained and was never still. One of the safest and most sea-worthy boats ever built, it can, nevertheless, achieve the most disturbing movements.

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But I could never let the Captain think me a land-lubber by self-indulgence in *mal de mere* and I never did. I was grateful for that training years later when I rounded the Cape of Good Hope in a troopship that was being tossed about by the largest seas I have ever seen. Huge vessels that were part of the convoy would completely disappear for long and anxious moments into the gaping troughs of the seas and I was able to stay on deck and watch and rather enjoy it. Feeling the roll of the great ship as it edged its way around Africa it was easy to send the mind spinning back across the sea to that little Catboat on the Sound. I could have wished, though, that the Captain had been there and at the helm. I would have felt safer.

Weir Fishing

Spring comes slowly to the Cape. She comes with halting footsteps, hesitant and capricious, one step forward and half a step back. You wait, and you are happier for the waiting, for at last she gives the earth her full attention and the land is renewed and green and shining amidst its four blue seas. It is the blue seas that have to do with spring's timidity. In summer they are the air-conditioners which give the Cape comfortable temperature while the near-by cities of the Mainland swelter. In November, their warmth holds back the winter and the threat of snow turns to rain. Then, until they are warmed again, they will, in April, hold back the springtime. Then, when your heart is ready for sunlight and the promise of spring, there may be a series of gray days with a chilling blast of moist air from the Sound, and in your impatience it seems as if it must be fated to be a year without a summer. From the still-naked branches of ancient elm trees a flock of crows caw defiance at the rolling mists from the shore. The first-come robins hop disconsolately about the grass as if they wished they were elsewhere and the crocus looks brave but somehow misplaced. It is the kind of day to make you look afield for comforting affirmations that spring is really on its way after all. Then you will see the little buds of green on the lilac hedge that only yesterday were not there. Perhaps through the opened door of a silver-gray barn you may see a Cape Cod boy putting the last perfect and gleaming touches to a fishing rod. But when you pass a certain large field where the fishermen's nets have long been spread for mending and creosoting and find them no longer there, you know that the weirs are out and, weather or no, it is Spring.

Not so long ago, standing on the beaches of the Sound

in spring, one could look along shore to east or west and make out the shadowy forests of the weir poles with their intricate web of nets stretching from the shallows of the land out into the fishways of the Sound. They, like the fleets of small fishing schooners that once set out from all our inlets to gather in the fish-harvest, were once an important part of the Cape's economy. Like the fishing schooners, the number of weirs along the shore has declined today, for they are expensive to maintain, both in capital and in the demands upon the men who run them for skill and hard work. But the fish are still there, and still, in spring, some weirs are set out along the shore to trap them. The weirs consist of a long, leader line of poles and netting that runs straight off-shore. At the outer end of the leader more fish fences run at an angle to the line of poles setting out from the land. The fish, ever leary of inshore, shallow waters, follow the leader line of nets outward until they find themselves without visible means of retreat and the only obvious means of escape from this mix-up appears to be through a small opening which seems to be the more a logical course because of the number of fish-brethren swimming about behind it. When they have entered the beckoning hole they are in the Pound where the mysterious maze of nets spreads not only around them, but beneath them, and they are doomed.

There could hardly be a sweeter awakening than to that of the *chug-chit-chug* of the weirs boats heard across the sparkling waters of the Sound in late spring. When I was growing up I would frequently rush to the window to watch the white wake from their broad-beamed sterns all the way to the weirs. When I knew from the sound of the returning boats—with their engine sound muffled now and the boats settling low under the weight of pay-load—I was punctually at the wharf to watch wide-eyed the unloading of the silver harvest. Trying all the while to keep out of the busy commotion of the unloading, grading, and icing down of the fish for shipment to the waiting cities, I would, eventually, end

up with a prize—a newspaper-wrapped parcel of tinker mackerel. The delicious, combined smells of wet newsprint, salt and the mysterious, dark regions of the sea went with me up the beach and homewards.

Once I took a closer look at the weir operation, rowing in a dory across the ornery bars at the river's mouth to where the water lapped softly against a sturdy, white hull in the gray, pre-sunrise. I followed the men over the side into the wide, stubby, gray-painted fisherman that would take us to the weirs. Feeling clumsy in the midst of adult fishermen friends who were suddenly full of business and doing all the right things at the right time, I sat quietly and somewhat miserably as the vessel made its way towards the nets. It was colder than I ever thought it could be on the Sound and the borrowed oilskins that protected me from the salt spray were stiff and had an uncompromising coldness of their own. But all of that was soon forgotten in the excitement of the arrival at the mysterious sea-fences combined with the glories of a sunrise over Chatham. Then the whole boat was alive with activity and very soon it was alive with fish. With hardened hands the fishermen grasped the nets and from the center of the Pound they drew the wonderful fish into the boat, a heavy, swirling, beautiful and ghastly, silver and multi-colored horde of tautog, cod, mackerel and haddock, and strange and unexpected things of the sea. In the capacious, interior of the rolling, settling vessel I was soon awash with them, knee-deep and more, and it was all the fish anyone could want for a long, long time. On the way into Port there seemed to be a good deal more than a sufficiency — and there were also squid. The day was now warmer — and now only through the greatest exertions did I maintain my sea-worthiness. Back at the river, which, with an assist from the incoming tide we navigated with style and without recourse to dory, I did not linger that day to watch the catch sent on its way to Boston.

It was some time before I realized how much I had really

enjoyed my trip to the weirs but it was no time before I had gained a tremendous new admiration and respect for the men who farmed them. There are fewer vessels *chig-chugging* to fewer weirs in the Sound now, but still on a gray morning in April you can discover that the nets and the long stacks of silver poles have left their landlubber existence in the fields of the Cape to go to work on the salt water farms. And still across the blue waters of the Sound you can hear the music of the little vessels on their way to the nets. Then you know that the men of the Cape are reaping the harvest for the appetite of the city—and most especially you know that it is spring.

Not All Fishing Is From A Boat

Not all weir fishing is done from a boat. Across the Cape from the Sound is Cape Cod Bay and there, taking advantage of their unusual oceanography, some ingenious north-siders have a different kind of weir-fishing operation which, so far as I know, is unique. At many sections of the Bay, the flats, at low tide, extend so far out from the beach that their outer rims at high tide are well within the fish lanes. Taking advantage of this feature, the men of the north-side set their nets on the flats in such a way that at low water the Pound of the weirs with all its flopping captives was all but on dry land. To harvest the catch they needed no chugging weir boat. Instead they used a high-wheeled cart, horse-drawn, in which they set out over the flats to return heavy-laden with the day's catch. Nowadays you can still see weir-fishing being done in this manner but the vehicle is more often a rusting Model T and it will never take the place for me of the sea-going horses and their faded blue carts. These carts were built for a single purpose. They belonged more to the sea than to the land and their pilots deserved the title "Captain" as surely as did their brethren on deep-water vessels — for the flats were tricky with channels and it takes more than a bit of knowing to plan a working trip out and back in the face of the incoming tide. I have often watched this strange kind of fishing on the north-side, following the blue carts to the Pound to watch the loading of the fish harvest. There was once a young girl who, with great respect addressed her grandfather as "Captain" and I cant remember that anyone thought there was anything funny about it. Neither was there about her ability as a "hand" when the cart's creaking journey to the Pound was completed and the work of sorting and loading com-

menced. She would wade into the squirming sea of fish with all the aplomb and skill of an expert, wielding shovel and pitchfork, and setting about her to left and right until, at last the cart was filled and the sea-going horse turned towards his home port. If I knew where that young girl of the blonde hair and blue dungarees were now I would tell her how wonderfully skillful she seemed to me as she went about her work. I would thank her, and her Captain too, for an unforgettable picture of a blue cart with its flashing silver cargo making its unsteady way over the flats while, behind them, the lazy gulls swooped screaming over the culls of the Pound and the air had in it the wonderful taste of a fresh, incoming tide.

Not All Fishing Is For Fish

Not many years ago, and for the first time in over a century, a long tradition of temperance on Cape Cod faced a threat which was the result of a most curious harvest from the sea. It was in the days prior to and just after the Great Depression that an unexpected windfall came to many sections of the Cape. The narrow land was surrounded by the sea and the sea was the avenue to the free lands across the water who were not engaged in the noble experiment known as the Volstead Act. Many a Cape "Captain" along the coast heard once more the old ancestral call of the sea and without hesitation he accepted employment in ferrying loads of contraband spirits into the convenient, little rivers and harbors of the coast he knew so well. He played a dangerous kind of game partly for money, partly for the pure thrill of winning a kind of hare-and-hounds game of nautical skill from the Coast Guard, and partly from a conviction that the law was bad enough as to not merit full obedience. There is often a conviction that Mainland laws are not tailored to the precise needs of the Cape. So it came about that on dark nights there would be a good deal of activity along the shore and in the dim light of a morning after the gray hulk of a Coast Guard Cutter would appear, always late, but always game and eager.

Sometimes an illegal load of liquor would be cached in shallow waters off-shore to await picking up at a later date; sometimes the Coast Guard pursuit would be close enough so that a sense of propriety indicated jettisoning the cargo before making a swift escape to the enveloping darkness of the Sound. Then, with the typical vagaries of Cape tides, the huge piles of burlap sacks would be exposed at the ebb and with rubber boots and wheel barrows (and a tacit un-

derstanding that there was no need to notify the authorities until morning) the people along the shore commenced a new kind of harvest from the sea. Cargos that may have been worth upwards of \$100,000 were split up to find their resting place at last in Cape Cod cellars and barns. From behind a barricade of imported—and almost priceless—Scotch whiskey the new Cape Cod fishermen smiled sympathetically, but happily, at an arid and land-locked United States. Of course many of the cargos did reach their intended destinations across the canal. One went in a hearse that was part of an elaborate funeral procession and a red-faced constabulary did not realize it until twenty-four hours after they had solemnly and respectfully assisted in its easy passage up the Cape and to Boston.

The Cape Codders who had participated in the harvest of the burlap bags full of straw-covered bottles of joy were following a time-honored tradition of beach-combing and salvage. Many would have been incredulous at the suggestion that any gift of the sea was not rightfully a case of finders-keepers. It is doubtful that any game of finders-keepers was ever carried out with greater enthusiasm until, at last, the Volstead Act was repealed and the liquor traffic came to a halt. For some it had not been the proudest page in Cape Cod history but it had undeniably been one of the most interesting.

There is this much too about the Cape. There is people. There have been — and will be again — some very great ones, and there have been and will be again some middling poor ones. There are heroes of song and story, and there are the every-day kind of heroes who live brave and good lives and no one hears about it. A Cape Coddler is not much of a one for blowing his own horn. He's not much of a one for an argument either. His response to the perpetrator of an intolerable rudeness is to ignore him. That is why some Mainlanders go home to lecture folks about the "coldness" of Cape Codders. There is an inherent wholesomeness about him which, like his work and play, his home and health, is colored by the land and sea and the salt breezes that sweep over them. The land and the sea have worked upon him just as surely as he has worked upon the land and the sea. And when he goes away it is to dream of a cottage by the sea and a coming back to the land that is home.

“J.F.”

My good friend, J. F. Small, who kept a grocery store in our Cape village, might not be considered a great man by today's standards but I considered him to be in the years that I was growing up and I always shall. He was kind and honest and efficient and he had a philosophy that was the equal of any situation.

J.F.'s store was a kind of hub of the community in those days and it was a good store, not one of the new kind where you wheel a little wagon around and feel foolish and can't find anything, but one in which he helped you graciously and simultaneously to good merchandise and good conversation, and everyone had plenty of time anyway. It was a well-built store, a kind of Greek-revival with a Cape Cod accent, meticulously clean within and shining without. Only its huge front windows and pale yellow siding set it apart from the village of neat, white houses that sprawled around it. To compensate for that, there was, atop it, a fascinating cupola from which you could get a view of the Sound. Along the front of the store there was a commodious porch with two large benches. The benches carried on their slatted back a faded advertisement for Dr somebody-or-other's Bitters but bitters were already out of fashion and you could hardly have read the advertisement anyway because the benches were never empty. They had been placed just so to catch the pleasant breezes from the Sound and they were for resting and conversation.

Inside the store and along each of the two side walls were rows and rows of narrow wooden shelves that reached right up to the ornamental tin-ceiling. The shelves held a colorful mass of tinned goods and Quaker Oats and tea and if you wanted something from the high ones J.F. would secure

it for you with a boat-hook. His aim was deft and true and it was always a temptation to ask for some of the little-called-for merchandise from the heights. In front of each of the tiers of shelves there was a long counter which held made-up orders and daily specials but most especially they held some very wonderful and tantalizing glass show-cases. The glass case to the right of the store held corn cob pipes and cut plug, shoe laces, work gloves and fish hooks, all in an ordered disorder that made everything easy to get at. No matter how much was sold this display always appeared to be miraculously unchanged. But it was the glass case on the left-hand counter that always drew my attention for inside it in regimental rows were displayed all the wonders of a small boy's world. There were sleek, curly licorice whips and cigar-shaped licorice sticks; banana-tasting candy in the shape of bananas, mint-tasting candy in the shape of mint leaves, peanut butter candy in the shape of pink, satiny bolsters; there were heart-shaped peppermints with red mottos like "I love U" and "Oh you kid", there were large, round, chocolate Old Fashioneds, orange and white "corn kernels" and many another item to keep a boy in agonizing, wonderful indecision. Time was only responsible to your own appetite and once you had made up your mind the penny candy would be carefully counted out and put helter-skelter into a small brown bag with a string around its neck. It would be discovered only later on the walk home that, somehow, several extra pieces had been slipped into the bag.

At the back of J.F.'s store there was a wrapping counter with a huge roll of butchers paper and a fascinating string that dangled down from an ornate iron cage at ceiling height. To the rear of the store also were the massive sliding doors of the cold room where all the good cuts of meat were hung. And then there was a stove-hole, neatly disguised in summer by a handsome chromo of Lake Como but, in winter, holding the shiny pipe that lead to a large coal stove. The cheerful glow from that stove in winter was a real attraction to the

men of the village who seemed to much prefer it to the warmth of their own kitchens. There was always a cluster of rocking chairs about it and they were never empty. They were for resting and conversation.

J.F. ran his store alone, except as the summer population began to grow he would hire a boy to make deliveries, with horse and wagon for many years and, finally, with a small truck with the name of the establishment modestly proclaimed on its sides. He was leisurely and when he became successful it was almost as though it had been inevitable, even though you knew better. Once a Cape bank asked him to join its Board of Directors.

"I drove over to that shiny, new building," he told me, "and it seemed as if even the car was hanging back on the way. When I got there I just walked up and down outside and looked at the bank and thought, 'this is no place for you, J.F.'. Finally I got up courage to go in and they were all sitting around a table waiting for me. They introduced me all around as if I was really somebody and then they got down to business. I tell you it was nothing but trouble. It didn't seem as if there was anything for me to *say* but I thought about it some and I didn't like it. Seemed to me there's plenty of trouble in the world already without my sitting there and hearing about more of it and passing judgment on folks I don't even know. So when it was all over I came home and wrote them a letter and said I would be pleased to stop being a director and I never went back."

J.F. thought a minute and then a look of puzzlement, incredulity and good humor came over his face.

"You know what?", he said. "There's a big picture of me hanging on the wall of that room. There's a brass plate under it with my name and 'Former Director' on it!"

Perhaps J.F. was already out of place in the twentieth century. His first, uneasy recognition of this did not come until the thirties when the store was still prospering and life in general was as uncomplicated as ever.

It was in the thirties that a lot of new terms began coming out of Washington and the Cape first heard of "the little people" and the "forgotten man." No Cape Codder would think of himself or his neighbors as little people and no one locally, at least, was ever forgotten. J.F. had always extended credit and had often given merchandise to help neighbors over the rough spots of poor cranberry or fishing years. A catastrophe such as a fire was the direct responsibility of the whole community. Otherwise, most people in our village, in those days, helped themselves — and had never imagined there was any other way. Nevertheless, the wheels of government had begun to grind and there was no doubt in Washington that the Cape was a part of the United States. Each mail brought J.F. a new form to be filled out. It was either an inquiry into matters he had always considered to be personal or a set of regulations to be followed in running the grocery.

Whatever professor devised those forms it was a sure bet from the beginning that he had never been inside a village store. Poor J.F. would squint through his glasses for hours at the devilish forms. Sometimes he would ask me for an opinion but, fresh as I was from college, and full as I was of the concept of the "century of the Common man", I could make no more head nor tails of the forms than could he. Finally he would shrug his shoulders in mystification and shuffle the forms into a pile at one end of the wrapping counter.

As the weeks passed the pile of forms grew until at last it was too big for the wrapping counter. Then they were set upon the floor where they were nearly out of sight and would have been out of mind except that the letters became more and more frequent and the demands more forceful. At the end of six months the pile of government verbiage was monumental and the letters had become almost violently threatening.

One day there came a letter from Washington by Reg-

istered Mail. It looked very ugly and very important. J.F. never told me what was in that letter but soon after reading it he stooped down and gathered up the monumental pile of forms and placed them on the wrapping counter. He wrapped them neatly and methodically in the good butcher's paper and he tied them securely with the string that dangled down from the little iron cage at the ceiling. To the huge bundle he attached an envelope addressed to the government at Washington and inside the envelope he had written a note in his neat, meticulous script:

“Dear Sir:

I do not know what it is you want me to do and
I am too old now to take the time to figure it out.
I give up. I am closing the store.

Respectfully,
J. F. Small

When he had made the bundle ready and inspected it for mailability, he picked it up and walked past the glass cases of candy and cut plug and he never looked back all the way to the Post Office. The Grocery Store was closed.

All of the merchandise in the store was hurriedly disposed of, but J.F. kept the building, and the chairs that were for resting and conversation and the stove that was for warmth in winter. He also kept the wide front porch with the two benches that had been set just so to catch the breezes from the Sound. I would sit there with him often, looking through the large windows to the clean, but empty, glass cases and the haunting shadows that the long-gone cans had left behind them on the rows of shelving. We would sit there and smoke and talk, or sometimes not talk, and we would watch the sleek, new cars of the summer visitors going by lickety-split to the new Super-Market down the street.

AUNT ALICE

Just at the corner where Main Street meets the High Bank Road at South Dennis there stands a little, gray half-house that was built back in 1835 by Captain Eleazar Nickerson. Above the door there is a beautiful fan-light window to set this little house off from others of its kind in the village. Wisteria vines have broken their way through the porch flooring and press around the fan light and lilacs press against the corner of the house. It is now an empty house and a sad house and it will never again be quite the same house without Aunt Alice. But it will be there along the High Bank for many another year and it will be loved again and hear laughter again because it was built to endure. And it was built with great artistry from its exterior dentil to its fine old panelling. It will always be "Aunt Alice's House".

I had just reached the door of the old white church at South Dennis after a Sunday service when I felt a tug at my arm and turned to meet Aunt Alice. She was small and sparkling and it was difficult to believe that she was eightyish. She was neat as a pin and there was a twinkle in her eyes that betrayed a sense of humor and something in the way she held herself that spoke of great inner strength. She was full of enthusiasm for the Yarmouth Register and she wished to volunteer her services in any way she could be of help. So, at eighty, she became the village correspondent for the paper, gathering the news, putting it down in faultless English in a firm, precise hand, and prefacing it with an appropriate bit of verse that was like a breath of springtime in any season. The problems of other people were always of more importance to her than her own and it was sometime before I learned very much about her. When I did I knew that my new friend was one of the last living members of that large

and courageous group of Cape women who had gone to sea.

Many a Cape bride followed her husband to sea, undergoing the dangers and inconveniences of that life in preference to the lonely night on the Cape, where she would be forever in fear of the news that she had joined the legion of women whom the sea had made widows. Many bore their children at sea and with a somehow pathetic zeal set about making a home of their husband's vessels. It was something to be with their men, but with their best efforts at decorating, and making things snug, the rolling vessels were a far cry from the comfortable white cottages to which they hoped some day to retire, always within sight of the sea, but no more to be upon it.

Much of Aunt Alice's strength must have come from her mother who, in 1882, travelled to New York with her ten-year old daughter, Alice, Alice's sister Helen, and a large assortment of luggage, to board her husband's three-masted bark, the Obed Baxter, for a trip to the other side of the earth. The vessel was bound for the Orient, carrying kerosene and oil for the lamps of China and, as the vessel pitched in the high seas of a northern February, oil fumes constantly escaped through the hatches. This, combined with the constant lurching and rolling of the vessel, gave all of the women a bad two weeks of seasickness where there was no cure and no hope except to get over it, and gain immunity. They did—and became as seaworthy as any members of the crew.

The skipper, Aunt Alice's father, had done everything possible to recreate a normal existence for his family aboard the vessel. The cabins were fixed up as nearly as possible like a Cape Cod parlor, even to a parlor organ, which doubled for entertainment purposes during the week, and as church organ for the regular Sunday services aboard ship. There were rugs and easy chairs and real beds, and for the children there was a dog and a bowl of goldfish. On a top shelf of the main cabin stood a row of handsome crystal jars from which the children were given a daily ration of multi-colored

hard candies. Education was not neglected, and a great store of schoolbooks had been brought aboard from which the children, under the watchful tutelage of their mother and father, completed their daily lessons. Each morning the Captain conducted a short religious service and each evening there were family readings from the Bible by the light of an oil lamp that swayed with the vessel as she drove westward. When schoolwork and household duties were completed, the children would wrap themselves in blankets and watch the cold waters slip by the prow of the ship. Hungrily they would watch for another sail upon the horizon and it would be an exciting moment when other American vessels drew near to signal navigation news and gossip of the home ports and of friends from the Cape.

Aunt Alice had departed New York on Washington's Birthday and it was over three long months before the ship sighted land. Then it was the rather grim and forbidding bulk of Christmas Island that met their eyes rather than the soft and familiar outlines of a Cape Cod shore. Like many another traveller since, they must have felt that the magic of "Christmas" was a mis-nomer. But there were other lands ahead, all with surprises of their own. At Java Head a wild and noisy lot of nearly-naked, native traders swarmed aboard the vessel with live chickens and fresh fruit to sell and once the girls had conquered their fears at the strangeness of them they were full of gratitude for the change in bill-of-fare.

The "Obed Baxter" arrived at Shanghai on June 25, four months out of New York. The tumult and confusions of that port would have been startling in any case for the Cape Cod wife and her two small daughters but it was made more trying by the fact that the Captain's sudden illness sent him to a hospital and left his family alone. Cape Cod sunk showed itself then as it would be called upon to show itself on many another occasion. Mrs. Baxter gathered her two children and secured quarters at one of the hotels of the

city. From there they visited the hospital and found time to do some sight seeing as well. What an experience it must have been, with the mother called upon to act fearlessly in order to conceal her worst fears from the children! And all in a land that was many thousands of miles from the peaceful Main Street of South Dennis and full of strange sights, sounds and smells. As they walked the streets a horde of beggars, chattering fearfully, tore at their clothes and pushed against them so that it took the greatest control not to show fear. On one occasion the first mate became so infuriated at being jostled about that he pushed a Chinaman backwards. The coolie fell into a boat, broke his neck and died, and the mate was arrested and sent to prison. While awaiting trial he contracted the dreaded cholera that raged throughout the city and died. Now the father-Captain was ill and his First Mate dead, and the three Cape women were more alone than ever.

At last the Captain, though obviously far from well, was released from hospital and the family was united once more. While lying in harbor, waiting for an outward wind, they experienced a real typhoon which raised havoc with shipping in the harbor but fortunately did no damage to the "Obed Baxter". Seeking shelter from the typhoon, other American Captains had entered the harbor. They must have looked awfully good to the South Dennis family. There was a Mr. Thacher from Yarmouth and Mr. Andrews of Woods Hole, (Woods Hole was only a two day buggy ride from Dennis, after all), and with other Americans, joined by the camaraderie of the sea, they formed an American neighborhood in the harbor of Shanghai. There was much visiting and exchange of gossip and presents and as the favorable wind held off there was opportunity to go again ashore, this time with friends and under more favorable circumstances. There was sightseeing, and souvenir hunting for Oriental whatnots that would someday grace the little parlor mantle back home, and there were ricksha rides for a nickel that made the once-a-

year advent of the carousel at Hyannis seem tame and expensive by comparison.

After picking up the remainder of the cargo at Hong Kong for the homeward journey the "Obed Baxter" set sail for home. One of the greatest volcanic eruptions of modern times had taken place in the Java Sea which lent the sky a weird, bright orange tone so that every day was like a perpetual sunset. The girls occupied themselves with scooping baskets of pumice and lava from the sea which was gray for miles with the debris of the volcano. (Aunt Alice, when last I visited her, had a piece of this pumice at her kitchen sink and reported it excellent for scouring pots and pans.) The Obed Baxter plowed through the South Seas, through raging storms and high seas, and through the doldrums when the ship hung silent and listless on a sea of glass. And then, while still thousands of miles from home, real tragedy struck the vessel with the death of the Captain.

Now the widowed mother and two small daughters faced a real test of courage and control. The ship was under the command of the Second Mate, who had only recently been promoted from ordinary seaman by the Captain. He had learned his lessons well, however, and there was nothing to do but go on. Aunt Alice's mother stood fast on one point. Her husband's remains were not to be committed to the sea but they must rest where he would have wanted to rest, on the hill at South Dennis. An understanding crew prepared the remains as best they could and, after a brief religious service, the flag-draped casket was secured upon the deck for the long voyage home. Then, after nearly a year away, "the Obed Baxter," her flag flying at half mast for its departed skipper, made New York. Now it was left to the mother to organize the trip back to the Cape where she must begin a new kind of life ashore. They had travelled across and back a limitless and hungry sea to the other side of the earth in a small vessel that, save for the skills at the helm, was at the will of the wind. They had encountered typhoon

and volcano, wild waves and listless calms, disease and death, and one hundred and one moments of the terrors of the unknown. But life went on, and you thanked your God that it had been no worse, for, in a sea-going community, the sea had claimed so many, and brought about such tragedy, that Cape people stood up to the buffets of life as bravely as their stout vessels stood up to the angry seas of the world. This was part of the strength that I had felt in Aunt Alice from our first meeting. It was a strength that came from an abiding faith in God and in His sense of the fitness of things — in an era when the living was not easy, and only the strong survived.

But along with spiritual strength Aunt Alice had many another attribute. At eighty, her one intolerance was for other people who were so concerned with being old that they had no eyes for the wonderful world about them, and particularly for the natural wonders of Cape Cod, its land and its four seas. She loved lights and laughter and music, and they were as important to her at eighty as they had been at eight, when she would dance and sing for the amusement of her sea-faring father. Once, when a play was produced by a local group in Liberty Hall at South Dennis, I foolishly expressed surprise when she told me she had attended both performances, and been among the first ones there. "Why," she exclaimed! "Do you think I could stay to home doing nothing while all that excitement was going on right across the street?" But she could never have just "done nothing". While she washed her dishes her mind was busy composing little verses, and when her household chores were done she would attend to a voluminous correspondence, or an item of news for the Yarmouth Register, or perhaps sort out her memories of her sea voyage as she looked at the oil painting of the "Obed Baxter" that hung in her parlor. She could reminisce about bygone days when she attended the first class of the new High School at South Dennis, or when she and her husband sang duets at the services in the

old white church on Main Street, but she never dwelt upon the past, because she was too interested in what the morrow might bring.

The little house at the corner of Main Street and the High Bank at South Dennis is empty now and lonesome and soon the signs of her not being there to “put it to rights” will commence to show. I miss my visits at the old house, but I shall always remember — and thankfully — a fine friendship that gave me much to remember and an insight into the kind of character that led Cape people to achieve greatness around the world.

SOME NIGHT BEFORES

If there is one thing above another upon which a Cape man has always prided himself it is his independence. Let them take what courses of action they will on the Mainland, and let them subscribe to whatever conventions they admire, the Cape man will make his own mind up about the issues before subscribing to them. It is a tradition that has not been easily come by, which back at the beginnings of American history involved sacrifice and heroism and the expenditure of the skills and treasure of the people, on the land and on the sea. In the year 1776, several of the Cape towns met and gave their approval to a Declaration of Independence from Great Britain a month before the official Declaration was issued on that memorable and long ago July the Fourth. The news of the Declaration on the first Fourth was a cause for almost universal great joy and celebration throughout the Cape and the spirit of independence that reigned that night has reigned in succeeding celebrations right up to the present time. The Night before the Fourth took on a very special and unique flavor on the Cape. Its nearest counterpart on the Mainland would be the old-fashioned Halloween in the pre-“trick-or-treat” era, together with a celebration of Freedom and Independence that had some of the characteristics of License. This was the night when the violent ringing of church bells on midnight of the Third of July would usher in a night of revelry and pranks into which had gone a full year’s planning. At least some of the sons of the Sons of Liberty declared themselves, for one night, to be beyond the law. Vested authority became fair game on the Night before and to them and to the more grouchy or less-popular citizens of the village there always befell the dubious honor of being among the first to have their outhouses overturned amidst

the boom and flare of giant firecrackers and the sound of running, revolutionary feet down the sandy streets of the village. The dawn's early light would reveal the still-smouldering ashes of Main Street bon-fires and of gruesome figures burned in effigy. It would reveal mysteriously-displaced store signs and the incongruous sight of carriages and wagons ingeniously hoisted to a precarious position upon the rooftops of the village. The first light of the holiday would also reveal the formation of the horribles parade that would commence on Main Street and wind its way through the village to the delight of younger children whose eyes were heavy from a sleepless night of anticipation. These were now armed with hoarded fire-crackers of their own and the biggest hero among them was he who had contrived the loudest explosion. The horribles wore fantastic masks and old clothes and they rode in ancient and decrepid vehicles of the town that had been borrowed or appropriated by night requisition.

The horribles parade marked the end of a night of freedom and confusion and made way for the more formal celebrations of the day. Then came the characteristic Cape clambake with the wonderful aroma of steaming sea-weed and shellfish replacing the acrid smell of punk and gunpowder. Then came the band concerts with the handsomely-uniformed bandsmen tooting the "Stars and Stripes" at its very loudest to replace the sound of exploding firecrackers. Where they failed, the inevitable speeches of visiting politicians and local patriots nearly succeeded. (It was a good time for grass-roots campaigning and the subject matter provided by the Fourth of July could not have been more popular.) As darkness fell, many of the villages supplied a formal fireworks display, sky rockets and handsome set-pieces, where suddenly out of the darkness there appeared in flaming color the unmistakable likenesses of Washington and Lincoln, of the fife and drums of the "Spirit of Seventy Six" and at last, amidst the final "ohs and ahs" of the deliciously happy and weary multitude, Old Glory herself, handsomer and

prouder than ever as she wove in the mechanical breeze of the soft July night. They were great days and happy days, something to be looked forward to and talked about for many months. But however fine the day, however well-contrived the day's celebration it was the story of the antics of the Night Before which always lived the longest. For it was then that vested authority was often enticed to look aside from the surging spirit of independence — and leadership passed, for a time, into the hands of the town's high-spirited young men, frequently led by the Town's Bad Boy.

Most of the villages had their Bad Boy just as they had their Fool. He was usually an over-sized, over-aged, juvenile delinquent, a perpetual adolescent who, nevertheless, had an ingenuity for thinking up unique outrages that made him the recipient of a kind of perverse admiration. In the village where I grew up the Bad Boy title was universally awarded to Henry.

Henry, in spite of a wide streak of plain badness, was a man of unquestioned charm, and the possessor, when he cared to avail himself of them, of extraordinary native wit, skill, and intelligence. He was a good hand aboard a fishing vessel, an expert mason, a better-than-average carpenter, a wit and raconteur, and to the mutual misfortune of himself and society in general, he was also a rare man with a bottle and a glass. A wise employer would pay Henry his wages only at the very completion of a job if he ever expected to see him again. This was entirely satisfactory with Henry who was aware of his own weakness and had the greatest respect for employers who treated him accordingly. For when pay day for Henry came at last, a week or more of outstanding celebration would follow, just as surely as the night the day. One such celebration ended with his return from New York in a taxi with a monkey and a parrot for fellow passengers. Directing the driver to a neat, white house, Henry requested him to wait while he went inside for the money with which to pay the fare. The driver has obviously been impressed with

the easy manner and good fellowship of Henry but, after some minutes had passed without sign of his fare, the driver hurried to the door of the house. An elderly and gentile Cape lady answered the hasty knock.

“Where is your husband?”, the cabbie demanded.

“My husband?”, echoed the good lady. “My husband has been dead for twelve years!”

Of course it was so and there was nothing to do about it. Henry, knowing that his Cape neighbors were not much for locking doors, had casually let himself in at the front and, without being seen, made a quick exit out the back, into the safety of neighboring woods and familiar haunts.

Henry's episodes generally took place during the spring and summer months because he planned on spending the cold days at Barnstable, enjoying the warmth, food and hospitality of the County Jail. He was always expected there then, and he hardly ever varied the routine. He was popular with fellow inmates and with prison personnel and, if his crimes were frequent, they were always of a comparatively minor nature. Once, though, he betrayed the rules of hospitality and it can be believed that his hosts must have taken a very dim view of it, indeed. That was the time when Henry, having completed one of many sentences, emerged into a bustling Cape springtime looking considerably stouter than usual. It was not surprising. A mile or so down the road he drew a prison blanket from under his swollen coat and sold it at a bargain price to an unsuspecting householder. With these funds he obtained a bottle and commenced the celebration of his release.

Henry, whose spirit of independence knew no limits and who knew better, nevertheless, took the attitude that a certain village constable, who then was the only force of law and order in the village, was the sole cause of his various “persecutions”. In the village for many years life became a constant kind of cat-and-mouse game between them. The constable was probably a good man, who in a town that was

almost without crime was hardly called upon to be a brave one, but he had an almost overwhelming sense of the importance of his own position and it was probably that trait that made him the everlasting butt of the revellers of the Night Before the Fourth. On that night, his home, on the lonely outskirts of the village, would become an armed camp while he, with a carefully-polished badge of authority on his chest and shot-gun on his knees, prepared to withstand an assault which never failed to materialize and never failed of success. His outhouse toppled readily like a leaf before the storm, firecrackers boomed beneath his veranda and beneath the very window where he sat in the darkness. Each time he peered from behind his curtain the assault began anew. Finally, as the first gray light of Independence Day filtered across the eastern sky he would be hung in effigy in his own doorway.

Henry was usually at the head of the attacking forces, of course, and it was Henry, of course, who conceived the idea of giving our Constable a memorable ride on one Night Before the Fourth. In the village cemetery, in those days, there rested an ancient town hearse, a curious, horse-drawn vehicle that was shaped like an elaborate coffin on wheels and whose walls and top were entirely of glass. So it happened that, on one Night-Before, the hearse was quietly pulled up to the Constable's house and he, protesting violently but uselessly, was placed within it, listening to the heavy clasp close above him, an unwilling captive in a glass cage on wheels. Then with great ceremony, in the manner of Timberlane home from the wars, the procession and its prisoner wound through the village streets. When, at length, the conquerors tired of the sport the constable was abandoned in the middle of Main Street where the first light of day and the earliest-rising villagers discovered him in his glass prison. Law and order was restored and he was released to try to restore his lost dignity. He never really did — but he did learn that when some Cape Codders went out to celebrate

their independence they really meant it. For, ever after, on the afternoon of the Night Before, our Constable could be seen driving his Model T in the general direction of the canal with never a look backward towards our village. On the morning of the fifth he would be back with us, his badge freshly shined and his billy-club at the ready to maintain law and order for another year — or, at least for another 364 days.

Henry would never have served as a model of deportment on the Cape and his good neighbors deplored his multitudinous misconducts. But his crimes were generally petty and they had a Falstaffian flavor which made him something of a legend. At one time or another you might find his counterpart in any Cape village, and in a day when bad movies had not been replaced by bad talking movies, and when radio had not even suspicioned television, Henry's latest escapades provided pretty good conversation during long winter evenings on the Cape. Certainly the celebration of Independence Day could not have been the same without him.

SOME PURVEYORS OF NOSTRUMS

Look at any copy of the Register of fifty to seventy five years ago and you will find that, if you can believe advertisements, there was hardly any ailment then of man or beast that did not have a cure. In the old newspaper columns you would find advertisements for Hop Bitters — Invalid's Friend and Hope ("no vile, drugged, drunken nostrum but the purest and best medicine ever made"), Hood's Sarsaparilla (a "reliable invigorant that excites the liver to action"), Dyke's Beard Elixir ("guaranteed to force luxuriant mustaches or grow hair on bald heads in from 20 to 30 days"), and a hundred and one sulphur tonics for females suffering from "general debility and delicate health". For the gentlemen there was Dr. Dye's Voltaic Belt through which "electricity" could "restore health, vigor and manhood" and for everyone, particularly in spring, there were a number of Ginger compounds. Ginger, which rode the clipper ships back from the Orient, was an especially favorite ingredient of spring tonics, which was often combined with other ingredients, enough to exhilarate anyone. For example there was Sanford's Compound of Ginger which noted on its label that to fine ginger had been added "genuine French Brandy, rendering it very much superior to all other preparations on the market." Inasmuch as the alcoholic content was duly listed as 67% it must have been superior indeed, and there would be little wonder if large segments of the population might not be almost excessively exhilarated come springtime.

The Cape was not left out of the race to make the greatest of all "specifics". A Hyannis doctor contrived the formula for Fletcher's Castoria, still a favorite household remedy which babies have been crying for — or at — these many years. And part of the memories of springtime for many

a Cape Codder is the little bottle, full of an untasty, brown liquid, called Speedy Relief, that still rests at the back of many a Cape Cod medicine chest. This remarkable remedy, which, from the label, seems to have been equally effective whether used internally or externally, must have brought shudders to many a Cape child before he hustled off to the comfort of a soft feather bed and the joy of a hot soapstone in a flannel bag to drive off the spring dampness that seeped into the unheated rooms above-stairs.

Speedy Relief was the invention of William F. Kenney of South Yarmouth and many Cape people today hold a clear memory of the man with reddish side-burns who carried a black bag full of small bottles and whose calls were as regular as springtime. Of course Speedy Relief was only a side-line with Mr Kenney who was, in addition to being a manufacturer, an inventor, the village jeweller, and in charge of the telegraph office at South Yarmouth. In addition he had a tintype studio and many a Cape scrap book is filled with pictures of belles and beaus who posed before the broken Greek column in his studio. Nevertheless, so sensitive are Cape Cod taste buds, that it is mostly the memory of Speedy Relief that has lived on.

The wide-spread popularity of the Cape's own specific played a part in providing a new minister of the town of Yarmouth with some unpleasant moments. His first service was progressing nicely, and it was clear that he had the concentrated attention of all his parishioners. Then he launched into his prayer on which he had spent considerable preparation. All went well until he solemnly intoned, "and to all our sick, bring speedy relief". These words nearly brought down the house with a wholly unexpected and unlooked-for reaction. The good parson must have been sorely perplexed, indeed, until he was at length let in on the fact that he had, all unwittingly, issued a kind of commercial for a local panacea.

There was another kind of commercial and it may have

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been the forerunner of all the terrible advertising jingles we are subjected to today. It had a kind of fascinating ring to it, and it is certain that all Cape children of the area were familiar with it:

**"Speedy Relief is my belief
And so it is of many.
Put up in bottles
With little cork stopples
And sold by William F. Kenney."**

Less popular, but with its own solid core of supporters was Aunt Sophie's Bitters which were brewed in the little house at the corner of Upper County Road and Depot Street. Aunt Sophie was a natural artist as a brewer of herbs and potions, for she was the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter, and what more was needed to imbue anyone with all manner of special powers. Was something lost? The neighbors would ask Aunt Sophie about it, and like as not she could tell them where to look for it. Above all, she looked the part she had made for herself, and acted it also, for, as she picked herbs in her yard she would carry on serious conversations with the scraggly brood of hens that picked their way about her, and they would appear to be listening intently to her every word. Needless to say, small fry, on their way home from school made a wide detour around Aunt Sophie's house. But young men on their way to sea — and young girls sick with love for them — would go to her for their "fortunes", and come away with wonder at the prospect of their "futures". Usually they would come away also with a bottle of the grim tasting bitters which found their way into many a Cape pantry in springtime.

Colorful as they may have been, the independent purveyors of nostrums were definitely out-classed by the village pharmacies which were, are, and very likely ever shall be, the heart of every Cape village. Here, on a cold, dark February night one finds the only light, and the only warmth, on an otherwise silent and deserted Main Street, Here, in sum-

mer, all is pleasant turmoil and confusion with a long line of small fry guzzling ice cream in the way that small fry always have since the beginnings of ice cream. And about the racks of multi-colored postal cards older folks gather, scantily-clad, but bronzed and happy, only momentarily perplexed by the problem of choosing the most appropriate card for Aunt Ella. Here are an endless variety of magazines with colorful covers that only slightly exaggerate the adventures to be found within. Likely as not some of them have never been sold, but there is, somewhere, someone who enjoys walking into the store to look them over each month. Many avail themselves of this benevolent library service and it is a rare Cape pharmacist who would make an objection. For the winter nights are quiet and long, and company, even intently-reading company, is not so bad. In winter, the pharmacy is a place to go, "up-street". There you can feel the slow, hibernated pulse of the town, hear an evaluation of local and national issues, and woe to the candidate who fails to cover all the pharmacies. The Cape pharmacist is doctor, librarian, caterer, banker, after-hours post master, good listener, psychiatrist, moderator and custodian of the local Forum where the freedom for expressing an opinion is a sacred right, and where the news is born that has become stale before the daily paper is delivered. Nowadays, nearly all pharmacies have a druggist who has learned to decipher the illegible scrawl of the local doctor and prepare the life-saving wonder drugs for the sick. But this was not always so, and even now the shelves are filled with some of the old-fashioned remedies which have their zealous partisans.

Once, in a Cape village, there was a pharmacy without a druggist, and when a modern establishment opened nearby which boasted one it didn't really make much difference. There were few, if any, defections among the established clientel. Late into the darkness of even a summer's night it would be the only light on Main Street, and the gooey sundaes that were dispensed in its ice cream parlor were, for all

small fry of the village, the very high spot of the day. By today's standards it was a rather small and dark store. The clutter of its window displays, which hardly ever changed from year to year, held back the lights, and, from the old stove, that was a comfort in winter, the smell of kerosene lingered on well into the summer. There was an extensive library that was hardly ever disturbed by a purchase — and there was a proprietor who was my very good friend, as well as white-coated steward to our ice cream club. There was nothing he would not have done for us in all the years of our growing up, and his presence in the village drug store lent an air of stability to a community that had already begun to undergo drastic changes at the hands of more and more summer folk who had discovered its charm. He was never anything but kind and helpful and, when we were old enough to recognize the strong smell of "medicine" that he occasionally dispensed to himself in the shadows of a back room, we were careful to avoid mentioning it, and only hoped that he would soon be feeling better. Once, though, I nearly let him down.

For years he had ordered the Sunday New York Times for us, and for years we had paid fifteen cents for it. Then I discovered, by chance, that a store in a neighboring village stocked the same paper for ten cents. Five cents was then the price of an ice cream cone, and it seemed very important, indeed.

"Did you know that you get fifteen cents for the Times while so-and-so up the street only gets ten?" I asked him one day. He always acknowledged a greeting or a bit of conversation with a characteristic lift of the eye-brows so that when he didn't feel a response necessary you would know that he had heard you just the same. This time the eye-brows raised at once, and the reply came quickly:

"That a fact?" I had a moment of weakness and was sorry that I had gone into it, for even five cents was not an excuse for hurting an old friend. But, standing my ground,

I answered, "Yes, that's a fact."

But now I was treated to a series of facial expressions that would have done justice to a Barrymore. Commencing with the raised eye-brows his face ran through the whole gamut, from disbelief to pained surprise to complete puzzlement until, finally, scratching at his thinning hair, he looked me straight in the eye, and said,

"Well, now *aint they foolish!*" I knew when I was licked and I paid the fifteen cents then, and for many a Sunday after.

Years later, when the whole world was to have Fords in its Future, and even a fifteen cent Sunday paper was but a memory, I called on my friend for what turned out to be one of the last times, but perhaps the most satisfactory. I had been away from the Cape for four years, in faraway places across the sea, and the face of much of the earth had been changed, and much of the earth would never be the same again. Even Cape Cod had undergone a change in the war years, and it was with rather strong emotions that I walked past the cluttered drug store windows and into the establishment of my friend. Thankfully he was there, a little older and a little grayer, but nevertheless there, behind the counter in his familiar white coat. His eye-brows raised in familiar greeting, and perhaps he looked up from swishing the soda glasses for a longer instant than normally. But when, after a moment he spoke, it was with the greatest casualness. "Hello, Allan," he said, slowly. "What'll you have? A coke?"

Then I knew that not all of the earth had changed, and I was glad of it as I felt the memory of four ugly years slipping quietly away into the shadows of the little store. Then, as was customary, he joined me in a coke, and we picked up the threads of our conversation, exactly where we had temporarily dropped them, in August of 1941. It was good to be home again.

MODERN HEROES OF THE SEA

February, on the Cape or elsewhere in the north, is a poor month, an in-between month, throwing the weather book at you when your resistance is weakest, hurling cold winds, sleet and rain, grayness and wetness enough to almost make you forget that spring is not so far away. February can bring a vicious kind of day that is unknown in any other month, a day when Main Street is deserted and battened down, when hurricane winds lash the trees and pile huge breakers upon the shore and you huddle indoors and are thankful for warmth and dryness and an occupation that does not call you out. February brought this kind of a night and followed it with this kind of a day on the seventeenth and eighteenth of 1952. The wind howled in hurricane force and there was snow and there was rain. The telephone wires screamed their resistance and, listening to their radios which could blot out the rage of nature, Cape people, for the first time, heard the names FORT MERCER and PENDLETON.

No one who was not then on Cape Cod can appreciate the horror and the heroism of that night and morning. No one who was then on the Cape will ever forget the pride we had for the men of the Coast Guard, nor the rather special pride for those Guardsmen who were Capers, carrying on in the same great tradition as their forebears who followed the sea. Even now it is difficult to sort out the facts of that terrible night when the incredible happened, and two sister-ship tankers broke in half off Chatham to become four separate derelicts, each with a partial crew, and each at the mercy of fifty foot waves that, with each gust of angry wind, threatened to sink them.

News flashes first announced that the Fort Mercer was in trouble, thirty miles off Chatham light. Finally it was

announced that she had broken in half. Meanwhile, the Chatham radar screen had shown two large objects about five miles off the beach. This, it developed, was the Pendleton, which had broken in two some hours before and because of a broken radio had been unable to wire her predicament. Even the Coast Guard, which had promptly dispatched every available vessel to the scene from as far away as Portland, could not, for a time, accept the incredible fact that two, five hundred and twenty foot tankers had broken up within an area of forty miles and a few hours. Even on the treacherous shoals of Monomoy there was no precedent for such an accident. Nor is it likely that some other macabre accidents of that night shall ever be repeated. For example, some time after the Fort Mercer had broken in two high winds caught up the truant bow and threatened to hurl it with tremendous force at the stern section. The stern section, fortunately, still had engines running and the order for "Full speed astern" was immediately given. The broken stern responded just in time to save the Mercer from a terrible and probably fatal collision with her own bow.

Of the hundreds of brave men who answered the Coast Guard's call to duty that February night, none displayed greater courage nor greater seamanship than the personnel of the Chatham Light Station. It was they who, without hesitation, launched two of their thirty-six foot open boats into the awful nightmare of Chatham Bars. Fifty-foot waves, thirty-six foot open boats, visibility zero, near hurricane winds, bitter cold with sleet and snow and the blackness of night. The small boats were each under the command of Chatham boys, Donald H. Bangs and Bernard C. Webber. Bangs, after a monumental trip across the outer bar to the sea beyond, first made contact with the Pendleton. Webber, through sheer will power and the help of God, forced his boat through overwhelming seas to the Pendleton's stern section. There, through the most skillful maneuvering, he took off thirty three survivors of the wreck. His trip to and

from the wreck was accomplished with himself lashed to the wheel and his crew clutching the bottom of the boat to keep from being washed overboard. The windshield was broken on the way out and water washed freely over the boat and her crew. How Webber succeeded in bringing his heavily overloaded boat back to safety and shore will never be known, but he did it. And meanwhile, other vessels had been rescuing the crew of the Fort Mercer. The great storm, which could easily have claimed the lives of eighty-four, had claimed fourteen, a heavy toll, but one which would have been so much heavier without the watchful eyes and skill of the Coast Guard.

There is a long history of friendly rivalry between Cape fishermen and the Coast Guard. Capers, who are often as at home on the water as ashore are apt to be critical of the spit and polish and new-fangled methods of the government service. But there was no criticism on that February night. The hats of the fishermen were off, in tribute to the brave seamanship they had witnessed. In many a weather-beaten face of Chatham the eyes were moist when it was known at last that "the boys have made it in".

There were medals later, presented at a Washington ceremony. But none would shine as brightly as the new place the Coast Guardsmen had found in the hearts of their Cape countrymen.

THE CAPTAINS

When the Cape Captains came home from the sea it was their realization of a dream of security and of normal family life for which they had fought the elements and endured countless hardships. Behind them stretched limitless miles of open ocean, the sea which had claimed so many friends and relatives. In the great days of the Clippers, between 1840 and 1870, the white stones in the cemeteries with the notation "Lost at Sea", had multiplied so greatly that to a stranger today it would seem that Cape Codders hardly ever lived long enough to die of natural causes. In the year 1840 it was estimated that there were over one thousand "sea-widows" residing in the County. Those who had come home to stay ashore at last did so with humility and thanksgiving in their hearts.

It is sometimes difficult to remember that the life of a deep-water Captain was a business, and a grim and lonesome business at that, in which the Captains were engaged in order to make a living for their families. They chose such a way because the sea was at their doorstep, and in their blood, and in the direction in which their talents lay. Of course there was something in it of the strong call of adventure, and they were equal to it, for they were intelligent and brave, and true pioneers. No port in the world was beyond their reach and in the clipper ships with the wonderful names (Red Jacket, Flying Cloud, Wild Hunter and the rest) they reached them and returned, not once, but a score of times, girdling the globe and reducing its size to the glory of their country. But for most it was the vision of a final haven in some Cape village, with wife and family, and enough money for security, that kept the Captains going through all the lonely years at sea.

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It is in the ship's papers and correspondence of the Captains that the inherent homesickness shines through and in ways that, in their subtlety, make it all the more poignant. Thus a river across the world "looks a little like our own Bass River", and a distant shoreline "makes me think of the highlands at home". Perhaps the Captain practices penmanship on a spare page of his log. Then you will see that the names he has written over and over again are those of wife and children, or of his home village on the Cape. Many would use their spare time to dream of the home they would one day build ashore and in the notebooks are frequent drawings of dream mansions, many of which became reality in a Cape village.

Sometimes the controls are off and in some moment of nostalgia he writes from the heart, baldly. One Dennis Captain writes to his owners, "Please to send someone to take over the ship when we reach San Francisco as I have been over three years without seeing home or family and cannot be away from them longer." Sometimes when things were going especially badly the Captain's remarks even broke into the "Remarks" column of the ship's Log as in this entry by a famous Cape Captain on his fortieth day at sea in the Pacific: "Oh, for a cot in some vast wilderness where I shall never see a ship again. If ever one poor fellow has tired of anything it is I that is sick and tired of going to sea."

As you look over the yellowed pages that the Captains have left behind, you feel that they only were able to shake their haunting vision of home and family when they had the greatest reason to have overwhelming pride in their craft and the challenges they offered. Let them break a standing record for crossing a sea, or triumphantly outsail a superior vessel, or accurately guess a position in mid-ocean just "from the look of things", or sail through tortuous straits where more timid men had said "cant be done", and the pride of honest achievement brought compensation for tiresome, lone-

some hours away from home.

Many of the Captains never realized their dream of retirement ashore, but many did, and with the money from their voyages they built their lovely homes along Main Street. Into them went some of the most exotic woods of the tropics, molded into fine panelling by ship's carpenters who loved the feel of fine wood, and played their own kind of music upon it. And into the panelled rooms went the relics of their hundreds of thousands of miles at sea — teakwood stands and rosewood chairs, tables inlaid with mosaic and ivory, the finest of china and crystal, wallpapers from France and carpets from Belgium, and all the countless odds and ends of curiosities that have appealed to souvenir collectors of all times and generations. Often there were so many things that they spilled out of the house and into the attic where they reposed in the Captain's sea chests that were kept standing "at the ready" just in case. Every house had such a surfeit of Oriental silks and embroidery that many a young girl, who wanted something really different to wear to a dance, preferred to buy a bolt of calico from the village dry good's store. But when all the curios and souvenirs had been distributed about the Captain's home, the place of honor would still be saved upon the parlor wall for the oil painting of the Captain's vessel as it was depicted by some far away artist as it entered the Port of Naples, or Calcutta, or Singapore. For the Captains could never divorce themselves entirely from the beautiful winged ships that had brought them safely home.

From their homes the Captains took their thankfulness and humility to the white churches of the Cape, many of which they had helped to build, and to which they gave their active support. All of the Captains had held regular Sunday services aboard ship, fair weather or foul, and many had held daily readings from the Bible which they kept in their cabin and from which they found frequent solace. Hardly anyone has been so thoroughly committed to the care

of the Almighty as the Cape Captain putting out to sea. Church-going brought the same kind of inspirational orderliness to their life ashore as they had taken to the helm of their winged vessels. At every Cape Meeting House one would see faces that had been long gone, but dearly remembered, as the Captains came home. These marine aristocrats were a subject of awe to the young, and their return was an occasion for joy to the adults, for there was hardly a family which did not have some connection of its own with the blue waters that stretched away from the Cape. So to the churches they came, imposing figures in Sunday black, often with magnificent beards and mustaches, always with a kind of slightly rolling gait that set them aside from their land-bound neighbors.

The Captains took their pleasure too. Fraternal orders were established in every village and they took an active part in them. There were trotting races over established courses such as the track which once ran around Wychmere Harbor, or the Trotting Park at West Dennis. And there were wild races over the snow with sleighs, such as took place over South Main Street in South Yarmouth down to the river, with horse manes flying and the beards of distinguished gentlemen thrust into the wind, while sleigh bells tinkled and the unblemished snows of yesteryear crunched beneath the racing hooves of the Captain's best horse flesh. Having a fast horse was almost as important to them as a fast ship. And in every village there was a favorite gathering place where, in winter, they would sit about a sizzling stove and have a pipe, and rattle off tales of faraway places which were then so familiar that no Cape boy could have been troubled with geography. In summer there were other things to do for recreation. Then it was time to paint up, caulk, and launch the small boats that they always kept handy. From them they could fish in the bounteous home waters, and feel the old, familiar swells of the sea, and dream a little.

But the Captains had not come ashore to live in idle-

ness. Almost at once they threw themselves into hard work ashore, putting the hard-earned money from the sea to good use. The biographies of the Cape Captains show them to have been as much masters of trade as they had been of their vessels. The list is imposing — bank presidents, and founders of banks, railroad presidents (for they sensed the wisdom of joining forces with the puny ribbons of steel that were already luring freight away from the sea), founders of manufacturies such as the mammoth salt works of the Cape and the 100 worker shoe factory at West Dennis, cranberry-growers and exporters, shipbuilders and ship owners — they were active in everything, and often they were as successful ashore as they had been at sea.

When the Captains came home from the sea they had a busy life and a good life, and it was good to be at home. And for the communities whose life they had so greatly enriched it was good that the Captains had come.

There was the narrow land and there was the sea that washed against it and there were people that developed many of the characteristics of the homeland. They turned to building with ingenuity and with loving care, and in the clean lines of their fences, their houses, and their places of worship there was something of the land and the sea, and of the kind of people they were.

THE CAPTAINS' HOUSES

There is often more to a Cape Cod house than meets the eye. First, there is an atmosphere, which even the most insensitive person can notice if he is left alone with the house. Once I found myself in the hands of a most unusual real estate broker who volunteered to show me a house which she insisted she would not, under any circumstances, sell to me. It was technically "For Sale", but it was, she said, "not a happy house", and she did not want me to have it. She could not really tell why she felt as she did, but, standing in its front parlor, in the midst of parlor organ, wax flowers, and Victorian confusion, I suddenly sensed what she had felt. It had nothing to do with a creaking door to the upstairs, which alternately opened and closed, although there seemed to be no wind outside the house. No, it was just that all the bright sunlight streaming in from the windows could simply not dispel the sensation of trouble and sadness in the poor, little house. Each heavy drapery seemed to retain the sighs and each distorted mirror to reflect the tears of an unhappy time. It had been a Captain's house because the familiar symbol of symmetrical spruce stood in the dooryard, but something was wrong about that house and even now it seems destined never to have a permanent tenant. Fortunately, I soon found my own piece of Cape Cod with an old Half House upon it in which at least two fine Dennis Captains had found comfort with their families. I knew at once that it had been a happy house where the sun shone in through crude, old glass as if it meant it, and where there had been laughter of the young, and enough love and affection to go around and fill its little rooms. Call it atmosphere, or spirits, or what you will, there is something about the feeling of an old house.

And structurally any old house can yield a story of its past. On the Cape this especially means when additions were made to accommodate an expanding family, or when a move or two was made across a field, or across a whole town, in order to enjoy the house in a better location. For the Cape Codder regarded his home as moveable as his vessel and they were built from the beginning so that you could up anchor and move her off with the greatest of ease. Even to this day the Town Report of Dennis lists among its Police Duties from 15 to 20 buildings "escorted through town" each year. My own house was no exception. Three ells have been appended through its long years of service and it has been moved to a new location at least once. Now it defies Cape tradition by facing north instead of south, but as the family room is now exposed to the sun, and the refreshing southwest breezes of summer, the break with tradition seems practical. It is easy to trace the structural changes that have taken place within the house to satisfy the taste of succeeding generations. There is the elimination of the partition of the "borning room" to make a larger living room, the installation of larger windows by a generation that couldn't be bothered washing the old, small panes, the relocation of the stairs for convenience and safety, and many other changes that a little house-detective work reveals. Recently, in the course of some reconstruction, I revealed some timbers, in one of the newer walls, that were heavily encrusted with salt. Clearly they had come from the old salt works on the River. When the salt works were abandoned Cape thrift put their timber to work in many a home, sometimes to the despair of carpenters who find that a nail soon rusts out of such wood. But the wood places definitely the period of the reconstruction of the wall.

Wood with a more interesting story was found not long ago in a Captain's house on Bass River, the large "Red House". Mr. John Sears had been doing some carpentry work on an ell of the "Red House" when he was puzzled

to come across some charred beams in the attic. He at first tried to think of some ancient fire at "Red House", until he remembered a story he had heard when a boy. It seems that a Cape schooner, laden with southern lumber, was beating its way up the coast in 1812 when it was suddenly attacked by a British vessel. Being near the land, the unarmed Yankee crew beached the vessel and took to the woods. The British sent a party ashore to set fire to the stranded vessel and then sailed away. The American crew watched them go, and then ran from the woods to extinguish the fire. They floated the vessel on the high tide and proceeded up the coast to Bass River. Part of the cargo had been scorched and charred, but it was strong and sturdy timber, not to be wasted on Cape Cod, and plenty good enough for an attic beam where it would never be seen. So here in the "Red House" on Bass River a carpenter found sturdy beams that had been through an action in the War of 1812, and another old house had revealed some of the secrets of its romantic past.

Two Captains, Two Sisters

Just beyond Cove Road in South Dennis, where Nickerson's Cove thrusts out from the River toward the white church on the hill, stand two large, white houses. They face different directions but their back doors are convenient to one another and these are connected by a footpath through a field. Both houses were built in the year 1849, the one to the north for Captain Obed Baxter Whelden,, the one to the south for Captain Ellis Norris. The Captains had married sisters and it was they who had first worn the neighborly path between the two houses, a tradition that has never changed. The Captain Whelden house is now owned by his granddaughter, Miss Anna Nickerson, while Captain Norris' house is owned by Mrs. E. S. LaRiviere who has named her home "The Skipper's Stairway".

Captain Norris' stairway is unusual not alone for its beauty and craftsmanship, but because it may be the only stairway on the Cape that was entirely built at sea. Captain Norris was skipper of the "Maggie Belle", and soon after his home was built he began planning his unusual staircase which was actually built at sea aboard his vessel. It was an almost incredible feat to accomplish away from home. Measurements must be precise so that the staircase would fit against the wall of the front hall of his South Dennis home. The unprotected side of the staircase (it was built in a graceful spiralling curve) was finished off with a single board which was subjected to steam for long hours and then, with infinite patience and care, molded into the intricate, twisting design of the stair. At last the staircase was finished and the ship was able to conveniently unload it at the foot of Cove Road where a wagon conveyed it in style to the house. There it was promptly installed, and there it remains today

for all to see, a perfect fit, a thing of perfect beauty, a stairway to elicit admiration, indeed.

There are many beautiful staircases on the Cape and they somehow became synonymous with the prosperity of the owner of the house. None have the same appeal for me, though, as the simple beauty of the Skipper's staircase. Aside from the stairs, themselves, it may have something to do with that little footpath which, despite changing occupants, has wound its way through the century from house to house and never once has been allowed to grow over. That is the way of it with neighbors on the Cape.

The little footpath ends at the homestead of Captain Whelden. This fine old house is picturesquely set on a knoll with a view of the winding Main Street of the village, of the Cove of Bass River, and the Captain's Church on the hill. It is perfect example of the influence of classical Greek architecture on Cape construction of the last century, and so artfully is it placed among its plantings that it appears as if it must always have been there. If you should pass through the swinging front gate you would walk past beautiful English box trees that are over a century old and among the largest on the Cape. These and other beautiful trees, the handsome panelling within the house, and the original gold-leaf wallpaper that came by clipper from France to South Dennis, are only a few of the attractions of this lovely, white house. And — as with all Cape houses — it has a story of its own.

Captain Whelden was master of the coastwise schooner "Robert Graham Dunn". He was another of the gallant men of South Dennis who chose a career at sea that gained success for himself and glory for his village. Unfortunately that career was cut off when, at the age of sixty-four, he contracted yellow fever in Florida and died aboard his vessel at Pensacola. With the same longing all Cape Cod men felt abroad, the Captain died with the single word, "home", on his lips — and the First Mate of the Dunn" was determined that the good Captain's body should be taken to his beloved

village for burial. But this was the eighteen eighties and the same superstitions that led Cape Codders to bury small-pox victims in an isolated spot (in the belief that this would stop the spread of the disease) held the crew in awesome fear of contracting the dreaded fever. They mutinied at the prospect of carrying the Captain's body home.

The First Mate of the "Dunn" must have been a courageous, loyal, and determined man, for, at length, the ship's mutiny was put down, and, in a metallic casket weighing well over a ton, the Captain's remains began the sad journey back to the Cape. Captain Whelden succumbed to the fever on Memorial Day, 1888, and on July 4 he was laid to rest at South Dennis, just down the road from the home he loved so well. Twelve Captains carried the heavy casket. It was a fine tribute to the memory of the man whose big white house by the side of the road still graces the little village at the heart of the Cape.

East Is West

Not far from the houses of the two sisters the charming old Cape Cod homestead of Captain Alpheus Baker, Jr., sits beside the Upper County Road. It is a white Cape Codder, trim and snug and gracious, and it must look very much the same now as it did a century ago. Old trees throw a graceful pattern of shadows against it in the summer sunlight and there is a perpetual air of friendliness and serenity about it. The house would hardly be noticed by the stream of traffic that rushes by its dooryard in the summer months, but the house is complacent too, and wears the air of there being "nothing new under the sun". One would not have to see the treasures within it to realize that it is a cosmopolitan house, content now to dream its dreams of a colorful past.

A "Short Trip Guide to America", published as late as 1875, dismisses the Cape as a "wild and desolate, but interesting, section of the Atlantic Coast,—this while devoting considerable pages to the description of the "wonders" of Lawrence and Lowell. It is curious that when a guide book was describing the peninsula as "wild and desolate", perhaps because it did, indeed, lead a life quite apart from the Mainland, Cape Codders, themselves, were among the most cosmopolitan people on earth. For them, distances were measured in terms of days at sea, and days meant nothing while in pursuit of their fortunes. Through the medium of the wonderful clipper ship, and the blue seas that were always near enough to be seen from the rooftop of any house, the world was at their doorstep. The best illustration of this, which also throws light on Cape character, is the well-worn anecdote of the central Cape Captain who had travelled many times around the world but had never negotiated the twelve mile buggy ride to Chatham. When asked, "How

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come?'' by someone who must have been a Mainlander, he would reply, "I just never had any business there". But the Captains *did* have business in Singapore and Hong Kong, in Java and the Indies, and in every important port throughout the world, and there they sailed often. At the time the "Short Trip Guide" was being written Captain Baker of South Dennis, still in his thirties, had already made several voyages to the Orient.

Once, on a return voyage from Hong Kong, Captain Baker brought with him to the Cape two Chinamen and one young Chinese woman. The woman was installed at the Baker homestead as a nurse for the Baker children, and, for what few stay-at-homes there were, a touch of the Orient came to South Dennis. The nurse was capable and attractive, and evidently her young charges were devoted to her. One can only guess at her thoughts as she stood on the bank of Bass River looking westward into the setting sun; or as she walked up the winding Main Street which must have seemed so silent and colorless after the bright hues and loud cries of Hong Kong. And one can only guess at the thoughts of the people of the town who looked through the curtained windows of staid, white houses at the strange figure in Oriental dress who walked their streets. It is to be hoped that they took her to their hearts and, if folks in the village then were as they are today, it is a certainty that they did. But one April, before the Cape burst into its myriad colors of coreopsis and broom, of lilac and daisy, and lupin, and all the wonderful signs of springtime that might rival the colors of China, she fell ill, and, in the little back parlor of the Baker home, she died.

At South Dennis, in the old cemetery on the hill, and hard by the Baker memorials, there is a plain white stone which reads, "Chinese Woman; Brought from Hong Kong by Captain Alpheus Baker, Jr.; April 5, 1872 at 31 years." Not far away is a monument to the memory of Captain Baker, inscribed, "His sun is gone down while it is yet day". For

the Captain had outlived the Chinese woman by only two years and had died at the age of thirty-six. Strangely enough, he too had died in a foreign land and was buried in Sourabaya, Java, where another white monument denotes his final resting place.

The old cemetery on the hill at South Dennis is a quiet resting place, watched over by sentinel cedars and the towering steeple of the Captain's Church. In summer there is the exotic perfume of wild roses, of fern, of sweet grass and of pine. It is very Cape Cod and, standing by the Baker plot in June sunshine, one feels the Orient is very far away. Still, if one took to the gleaming seas, and rode the wings of the clipper ships, Hong Kong was nearer than Chatham — at least if one had business there.

OF CAPE COD FENCES

Sometimes, riding around the highways and byways of the Cape, you become so conscious of the mass impression of uniqueness and beauty that you lose sight of some of the finer details that have gone into it. Of such details is the Cape Cod fence, a very important part of our landscape, but one that frequently goes unnoticed. Cape fences add to the air of security and independence and snugness that all Cape houses wear. They were the product of an age of hand craftsmanship and artistic imagination, and many of them were designed, and even whittled out, aboard ship, in all the four corners of the earth. Needless to say they bear no resemblance to the poor products of mass production which are labelled "Cape Cod Fences" and sold over the counters of department stores many miles from the Cape.

With the advent of the summer visitor the picket fence has enjoyed a popular renaissance and they look very much at home around old or reproduction Cape cottages. When June arrives the fences form a handsome background for the multitude of climbing roses that tumble over them in colorful cascades. The summer people have also made frequent use of the split-rail fence which was certainly used on the early Cape but never as widely as some other types. Over on the North side there were bothersome, but handsome, field stones which, as the land was cleared, were built into rambling walls, adding so much to the charm of that area. As the nineteenth century grew old and the land was secure, and the Captain's prosperity was being felt in the villages, it became time to indulge in tidying up and beautifying the stark simplicity of earlier times. Then the mansions became more ornate and so did the fences. You can see them all over any village, particularly on Main Street, such as the very

beautiful wrought iron fence that surrounds the Captain Obed Baker mansion in my own village of West Dennis. The elaborateness of the fences became as much a symbol of the wealth and importance in the community of the owners as did the houses, themselves. Fortunately, all of them somehow managed to retain a standard of good taste and authentic Cape Cod flavor which makes them both suitable and attractive.

What had become something ornamental had once been extremely useful, which may explain the frequency with which you will see a fence on village streets. "Good fences make good neighbors" is not a Cape expression! With husbands and sons out on the broad Atlantic, or only God knew where, there was no inclination on the Cape to discourage neighborliness. Far from being a defense against neighbors, the Cape fences were primarily built as a barrier to four-footed intruders. For in the old days beef and lamb and pork products were delivered to the villages "on the hoof". Large droves of cattle and swine were regularly driven through the village streets, all the way down Cape. In each of the villages the butcher would select his purchases and then the herd would be driven on until the last animal was sold. The route and estimated schedule of such drives would appear in the Register columns some time in advance in order that the towns could be made ready to receive them. It must have been a day of great excitement when the swirls of sand, rising from the outskirts of the village, heralded the approach of a drive of pigs or cattle that would soon be passing through Main Street to the accompaniment of the shouts of the drivers and the delighted whoops of small boys who were the unofficial escorts of the herds through town. Without a doubt there were anxious moments for the home-owners along the way who could be grateful for the sturdy fences that stood between the pushing, shoving animals and their prized flower beds and vegetable gardens.

Now, once again, the fences are purely ornamental, and

the regular drive of cattle has been replaced by the cellophane-wrapped cuts of meat at the chain stores. But some of the fences still have a function and one of these is my own favorite, the white-painted, acorn-topped, hand-turned posts which support three substantial rails. There are many fine examples of this wonderful fence all over the Cape and they are good, not only for their clean lines that blend so well with the landscape, but because they were wonderful on which to sit while watching the passing show — in days when one could find time for, and enjoyment in, just sitting. In the Cape village where I grew up there was a fine one, close by the post office, and it used to support a dozen men and boys, sitting, like starlings on a telephone wire, all in a row, and making just as much noise. This was the local Forum. Here, the blessings of freedom of speech were enjoyed to the full, and everyone had his say, sitting on the same level as his neighbor, with a whole long fence to choose from and no seat better than another. It was an all-male society, with some whittling, some cussing, some spitting, and more than a little story-telling. Here, there was an unwritten law about accepting even the tallest tales with complete credulity, and, with such latitude given, the tales sometimes became very tall, indeed. But I believed every last one of them, and really still do. Furthermore, if that fence had not bowed to progress years ago, I would be there now, pop-eyed and listening, while the summer's sun warmed my back and my bare toes dug into the sandy soil — for, from a perch on an acorn-topped fence, your toes could just reach the soil and it was a comfortable feeling.

SOME OLD MEETING HOUSES

Perhaps no single work of man enhances the beauty of a Cape village so much as the sparkling white churches whose spires point unerringly toward the blue heavens and serve as landmarks to Cape Codders at sea and ashore. One can find them conspicuously at the center of each of the old villages, and, indeed, it was from their presence that the villages grew. For the early Meeting Houses were not only centers of worship but of government and of all community activity. Distances between villages were computed as between Meeting Houses and until very recently there were many road signs directing travellers to one or another of them, a testimony to the importance of the church to the life of the town.

The early colonists of the Cape were a plain but very pious people and in view of the hardships they endured in the building of a new land it was little wonder that they turned to their God for help, and in Thanksgiving for His bounty in the new surroundings. In many cases they built their churches before they had built their homes and they used them. Someone who visited the Cape remarked that "there are too many churches for any of them to prosper", but, at one time or another each of them was filled to the rafters. The settlers came to church out of choice and necessity and as the land prospered the farmers and the tradesmen and the Captains came in humility and thanksgiving, giving generously to the support of the beautiful, white edifices that were the symbol of their devotion to Christianity. They have survived waves of free thought, of come-outers, Quakers, and bad times and good and they still stand, a monument sculptured in wood to man's best dreams, their plain, dignified and honest lines a living testimony to the character of the Cape men who built them. Thankfully, after the custom of

the forefathers, Cape people still gather at the churches on Sunday and there are none here that stand empty and abandoned.

In the early times on the Cape the activities of the whole week were directed toward the Sabbath, and its observance took much longer than the hour or two now devoted to it. Sunday in all the villages really commenced on Saturday night when the diversions and duties of a workaday week were finally and quite definitely put aside. On Saturday afternoons Cape kitchens were warm and fragrant with the aroma of a week's baking, part of which would first be savoured at Saturday night supper when the succulent baked beans and brown bread would make its traditional appearance on the kitchen table. And Sunday breakfast was almost as traditional with the warmed-over beans frequently accompanied by fish cakes of local cod which had been taken from a cool Cape cellar or buttery where it had been put down in native salt. Breakfast done, Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes came out from their week's retirement, usually to the utter distress of the younger members of the household who, from the stiff postures and unhappy looks and squirmings could have been in fetters, rather than in starched-bosom shirts, black store clothes, and — most repulsive of all — highly polished, imprisoning boots. So restrained did the young feel without the casual freedom of their weekday clothes that they would have had neither taste nor heart for play, even had it been allowed. So they sat stiffly with the other members of the family, as if awaiting the judgment, until, at quarter to eleven, the commanding tones of the great church bell were heard. Then the great movement commenced along the narrow, twisting lanes, with each house emptying its very sedate and formal members into the streets which led to their common destination, the Meeting House. There they would find their more distant neighbors assembling outside with the horses and wagons that brought them secured in the rambling sheds nearby and within sound of the fine old hymns

that would soon be rolling out through the opened windows.

The motorist of today on Cape Cod will, in time, begin to look for familiar landmarks. A white spire soaring above the pines indicates the presence of a village and each has identifying characteristics of its own. To the traveller coming home to the Cape there is no other landmark as welcome a sight as the old, gilded weather cock which perches above the West Parish Meeting House at West Barnstable. When, from the new Mid-Cape Highway, you first catch sight of this grand bird shining, golden and bright and triumphant above the trees you know that you are really on the Cape and that an old friend is keeping the same watchful eye over land and sea of today as in the days of the American Revolution and before. For the weather-cock crowns the steeple of the oldest Congregational church building in all America. It is a beautiful structure which served the Town of Barnstable as Meeting House during the most fateful days of American history and, through the foresight of some Cape Codders, it is now being restored to its full, and original magnificence. Already the exterior of the church has been restored until it is now the very same one that was familiar to Commodore John Percival, Chief Justice Lemuel Shaw, James Otis, and a host of other great men and women of the County in the days when greatness seemed to touch all those within sight of the dunes and the salt marshes of Barnstable. The site for the Meeting House could not have been better chosen and today, more than ever, the old church, on a slight elevation where tree-lined Cape roads meet, is an edifice of great beauty and dignity, commanding attention.

As beautiful as the newly-restored church appears from the outside, it is, nevertheless, the unfinished interior that proves the wisdom of the restoration program. Looking upwards at the dome of the Meeting House with its tremendous beams and unique bowed rafters is an awesome experience. Standing there it is impossible not to feel in touch with the historic past, with the very beginnings of America. And you

marvel at the artistry and ingeniousness of the builders who carved these huge timbers from local forests, who weighted them down for a full year to achieve the desired bow shape, who built a framework which is as staunch and true today as ever it was, and that has stubbornly resisted the encroachments of passing fashions. The workers who are in charge of the restoration have been touched with the magic of the place. They speak with great respect of those long-ago builders of the Cape and they point with enthusiasm to the many ways in which the historic structure is coming back to life.

Just down the road a piece, and toward the great marshes and the picturesque dunes that stretch out towards Sandy Neck, the King's Highway continues its rambling way from West Barnstable down Cape. It is a street of green lawns and historic houses, of flowering shrubs and well-kept gardens that flourish in the good, black earth of the North Side. There is so much to see there that even the most observing may pass by, unseeing, the peaceful, old, white church at the corner of Rendezvous Lane at Barnstable. Amid the shadows from ancient trees the church dreams serenely in the summer sunlight and it is difficult to imagine that this is the very spot where, in the year 1774, there took place one of the most unusual and daring blows for liberty in all our history.

The Third Baptist Church of Barnstable was formed in 1842, after it had purchased, for \$77.00, the second Barnstable Court House which had been built in 1774. The old, wooden building had been abandoned by the County upon the erection of the new granite Court House and the Baptists found it well suited to their needs. The building was turned around from the Highway to face Rendezvous Lane and some alterations were made to make it more suitable for a Meeting House. Today, a bronze tablet within the church proclaims that "this building was the Court House where the King's Court was forced to end its sessions by a band of patriots in September 1774."

The march of a "Body of the People" to Barnstable on September 27, 1774 took place as the result of an Act of Parliament which, in those hectic days, seemed to be enacting everything possible to alienate its colonials. The new act proclaimed that jurors, heretofore drawn by the selectmen, should now be chosen by the Crown's own representative, the Sheriff. Under such a system it was obvious that the Crown would control the whole local system of justice, and those who came before the courts, and were known to be unsympathetic with the Crown, would receive very short shrift. The patriots decided that, to effectively show protest to such an act, they must close the lower courts, in order that no appeals would reach the "packed", higher courts. To carry out this purpose a large body of men assembled at Sandwich on the night of September 26, 1774. There they planned for the morrow what must have been the Cape's first picket line.

On the morning of September 27, the newly-formed Body of the People moved towards the old Court House at Barnstable. They were afoot and on horseback, with the horsemen in the lead, and through every village they passed their number was swelled. When they passed the home of Chief Justice Otis they respectfully raised their hats in salute and preceded him to the Court where, 1500 strong, they awaited the opening of Court. The air at Rendezvous Lane must have been charged with suspense and expectancy when, at last, the Chief Justice and his aides, led by the Sheriff, complete with drawn sword and staff of office, approached the unprecedented group who blocked their passage to the Court House door. Justice Otis, upon ascertaining the business of the group, ordered them to disperse. Through their leader, Nathaniel Freeman of Sandwich, they replied, "We thank your honor for having done your duty; we shall continue to perform ours." And continue they did, until the Justice left the scene and it was established that there would be no session. Before the day was over the patriot band had fur-

thermore obtained written agreement from the Justices that they would not carry out the objectionable Act of Parliament that had inspired the march.

If the Body of the People became the Cape's first picket line, it was also the most orderly one anywhere at any time. In their preparations for the march on Barnstable they had ruled against the use of profanity and alcohol. They were well-disciplined, and entirely under the control of their democratically-chosen leaders. The group at Rendezvous Lane on the September morning was no "rabble in arms"; it consisted of some of the truly great men of the Colony, making an effective, but respectful, protest against an injustice which threatened the freedoms for which they had crossed the broad Atlantic. It was like the men of the Cape to settle their own problems in their own way. Two years later the Colonies adopted the Declaration of Independence. Cape Codders had chosen their way at the little white church in Barnstable.

From the window of my old house at West Dennis I look out over the blue Cove of Bass River to where the white Captain's Church rises on the hill at South Dennis. It is bright and peaceful and meaningful. In summer it is framed by the lacey branches of elm trees on the near shore; in winter it is a beacon of light in a gray landscape. I have watched the purple shadows of night slide softly from its sides in the spring sunrise; and I have watched an autumn sunset gild its steeple with burnished gold. It is good to have it there, where it has stood and looked across the Cove for over a century.

It was felt that Dennis had come of age when, in 1795, the Southside of town were granted a Meeting House of their own, to be erected at South Dennis. At first the new Meeting House was supplied by ministers from other churches but by 1817 the Reverend John Sanford was called as its own pastor to administer to a church membership of twenty-nine persons. Eighteen years later the church had become

too small to accommodate the growing parish. Then, too, there was already stirring within men the inspirations of a country come of age, when the hurried, rather crude buildings of another era must be replaced by an architecture that was more expressively American. So, in 1835, it was decided to tear down the old edifice and build a fine, new church on the same site. It was hoped that the auctioning off of the pews, combined with the voluntary labor of men of the village, would be enough to get the building started, at least. Fortunately for all of us there was also the matter of the beans.

The men of the parish met on a bitter, cold day in January to consider ways and means of financing the new church. It was the kind of day to discourage any kind of action, and the offers of financial help were desultory and infrequent. Thoroughly discouraged, one of their number slipped out of the meeting and returned to the warmth of his own fireside to think the matter over. Finally, he had an inspiration and, calling his wife he asked her if she could provide dinner for as many as were attending the meeting. "For," he said, "if those men go home for dinner they will never come back and that will be an end to it." Upon hearing the problem the good wife set to work. Luckily, the week's baking was almost intact in the buttery, and, by the standards of the Cape in 1835, it was not at all unusual that there were twenty-five pies stored there. But that was not all — there was Indian Pudding, and baked beans galore, yearning for the company of the huge loaves of brown bread that soon came steaming from the oven. All that was needed to complete, a dinner, the very smell of which might fill any man with a sense of well-being — and generosity — was coffee. And soon she had made coffee, scalding hot, and brimming over from the biggest container in her house. In no time at all the full dinner had been delivered to the meeting where its effect was such that the men of the parish took on a whole new lease on life and began to outbid one another in gener-

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osity. The huge sum of \$6000 was raised, enough to build the new church, and some of the men became so enthusiastic that they could not wait to get to the bank to withdraw their money.

So the white church was built, there upon the hill, and it was not then very different from the building a visitor would enter today. The same tower clock, and the same auditorium clock would, when not seized by the temporary fits of temperament that are the privilege of age, be telling the same old time, while the same chandelier with its lovely etched globes would be sending forth the same warm glow over the white walls and straight-posture-demanding pew. And the light would glint as ever from the sides of old silver, the original Communion Set. Now, from the front of the church, instead of from a balcony as before, would come the strains of organ music from an instrument that has been doing its Sunday duty for nearly one hundred years at the same church, and had done duty elsewhere for a hundred years before that. This is very likely the oldest organ still in regular use in America, and it is not just by coincidence that it is frequently used to play hymns which have in them the fresh, salted breath of the sea. Tablets offer long lists of names of the South Dennis Captains who were members of the church. Now, as then, among the congregation to whom "He gives the keeping of the lights along the shore", there are Nickersons and Thachers and Crowells and Bakers and Kelleys, and there are newer faces and newer names. Many have followed the advice of their first pastor to "read and understand the history of your pious forefathers, than whom no people under heaven are entitled to higher honors." And all have helped, and gladly, to keep this splendid symbol of the forefather's faith a living and a meaningful one. So it is too all across the Cape and up and down it, wherever a white church looms by a village street, and its noble spire points to the blue heavens.

When you have finished with it you have only begun. You speak of a number of things that are yours, and it is the smallest fragment of the picture. Have you seen the Cape at Christmas? Then the nights are black and the Christmas lights shine brighter and in the crisp night air the stars shine brightly too. The villages are evenly-spaced islands of lights along the highways, cheerful islands and brave ones, and you feel that there would have been room at the Inn here, or in any of the small homes which look through unshaded windows and greenery toward the streets. Do you know the Cape in summer? Then there is a sudden hustle-bustle along Main Street and you count the number plates from every state in the Union. It is a time of sunshine, tanning and gilding, and the soft, dreamy haze of August. It is roses tumbling over fences and the merry tinkle of ice in frosted glasses. It is blue skies and white clouds, and blue waters and white sails, and the drone of outboards on the River... It is extra clerks in the stores and the cheerful jingle of bulging cash registers, and better still, the shouts and laughter of children as they splash in the warm waters of the Cape while the fizzing spray breaks over them, and the sun toasts them, and they are free. Have you seen the sunrise over Chatham Bars? Or seen it set from St. Andrews or Sunset Hill? What of the woodsey road that winds along Shawme Hill where you can watch the old town of Sandwich dreaming through a summer's afternoon, where you look over the quiet mill pond and its white church spires to the blue Bay and the cliffs of Manomet. Have you watched one of nature's miracles at the Herring Run in Brewster of an April day; or stood beside a quiet inland pond at Harwich of a fall evening and watched plumes of mist rise from the water to do a graceful ballet while the Cape begins to sleep? Have you followed any of a hundred beckoning roads to whatever treasures they may reveal? When you have done all these things you will begin to know a part of it. One day, as you cross the Canal bridge, your heart will begin to lighten, and the tensions of the Mainland will slide away. The land will take on a wonderful familiarity, and you will know that you are home, and that is all there is to it.



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